REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application, as amended, is respectfully requested. Claims 1, 17, 19, and 20 have been amended. Therefore, claims 1-22 are presented for examination.

Examiner rejected claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regards as the invention. Applicants have amended claim 1, the claim objected to by the Examiner, to more clearly claim and distinctly point out the invention. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph be withdrawn.

Examiner further rejected claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No.5,960,422 to Prasad. The Examiner allowed claims 15 and 16, and objected to claims 13, 14, 21, and 22. The Examiner further noted that claims 3-5, 8, 9, and 11 would be allowable if claim 1 were rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Prasad discusses an information retrieval system in which source selection is optimized. The system of Prasad receives a query (question) from a user. The system uses "rule induction" to provide an automated selection of desired sources based on the user's query. (Column 3, lines 8-10). The system iteratively performs this process on a test set and the training set, until classification errors are minimized. The user then receives, in response to his or her query, the predicted top N sources most likely to contain documents satisfying the query. The system of Prasad does not present a query to a user, and request a response. Rather, it functions as a standard search engine, presenting an answer in response to a query. The Examiner references column 3, lines 1-15 of Prasad. However, that passage simply discusses generating a user query, obtaining a list of data sources, and in a "supervised machine learning

technique" determining the desired sources based on the user query. The "supervised machine learning technique" of Prasad is described at column 4, lines 17-34. It is noted there that the dictionary can be created with the aid of a human expert, or automatically. However, using a single human expert teaches directly away from the present invention, which uses non-expert netizens to train a system.

Claim 1, as amended, recites:

> A method of machine learning using a training process to train a learning system, the method comprising:
>
> presenting queries to non-expert netizens over a network, the netizens participating in the training process;
>
> continually updating the system and refining the queries based on responses to the queries provided by the netizens.

(Claim 1, as amended). Thus, the present system presents queries and receives responses from netizens. As noted above, Prasad's system does not receive a response from netizens, nor does it use netizen responses to update the system and refine queries. Rather, Prasad's system generates an internal response to a user query, like a traditional search engine, and then performs internal analysis on the response generated by the system. This is quite different from, and teaches away from, posing a query to, and receiving a response from a netizen. Therefore claim 1, and claims 2-11 which depend on it, are not anticipated by or obvious over Prasad.

Claim 12 recites:

> A system coupled to a network to present queries to and receive responses from a plurality of netizens over the network, the system comprising:
>
> a user interface to present the queries and receiving the responses;
>
> a data aggregation logic to organize the responses;
>
> a query formulation logic to formulate a next query based on the plurality of responses to the last query.

(Claim 12). As noted above, Prasad does not present queries and receive responses from netizens. Furthermore, Prasad does not teach or suggest a query formulation logic to formulate a next query presented to a netizen, based on the plurality

of responses. The Examiner refers to column 3 lines 15-31. However, that portion of Prasad discusses refining the "rule induction" model, based on separating out a percentage of the sources, as a test group. Prasad does not teach or suggest formulating a new query based on a plurality of responses to the last query. Therefore, Prasad does not anticipated or make obvious claim 12, nor claims 13 and 14 which depend on it.

Claim 17, as amended, recites:

> A machine readable medium having stored thereon data representing sequences of instructions, which when executed by a computer system, cause said computer system to perform the steps of:
>
> presenting queries to non-expert netizens over a network, the netizens participating in a training process of a learning system;
>
> continually updating the learning system and refining the queries based on responses to the queries provided by the netizens.

(Claim 17, as amended). As discussed above, Prasad does not teach or suggest presenting queries to netizens, receiving responses, and based on the responses updating the learning system and refining the queries. Therefore, claim 17, and claim 18 which depends on it, are not anticipated by or obvious over Prasad.

Claim 19 recites:

> A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave comprising:
>
> a user interaction code segment to present queries to and receive responses from netizens; and
>
> a response evaluation code segment to evaluate the responses; and
>
> a training code segment to update the system and refine the queries based on the responses to the queries provided by the netizens.

(Claim 19). As discussed above, Prasad does not teach or suggest presenting queries to netizens, receiving responses, and based on the responses updating the learning system and refining the queries. Therefore, claim 19 is not anticipated by or obvious over Prasad.

Claim 20, as amended, recites:

> A system for implementing a training process comprising:

a means for presenting queries to and receiving responses from non-expert netizens over a network, the netizens participating in the training process;

a means for continually updating the system and refining the queries based on the responses to the queries provided by the netizens.

(Claim 20, as amended). As discussed above, Prasad does not teach or suggest presenting queries to netizens, receiving responses, and based on the responses updating the learning system and refining the queries. Therefore, claim 20, and claims 21-22 which depend on it, are not anticipated by or obvious over Prasad.

Applicant respectfully submits that in view of the amendments and discussion set forth herein, the applicable rejections have been overcome. Accordingly, the present and amended claims should be found to be in condition for allowance.

If a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Judith Szepesi at (408) 720-8300.

If there are any additional charges/credits, please charge/credit our deposit account no. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: 11/15/02

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Once Amended) A method of machine learning using a training process to train a learning system, the method comprising:

[setting up a system for learning;]

presenting queries to non-expert netizens over a network, the netizens participating in the training process;

continually updating the system and refining the queries based on responses to the queries provided by the netizens.

17. (Once Amended) A machine readable medium having stored thereon data representing sequences of instructions, which when executed by a computer system, cause said computer system to perform the steps of:

[setting up a system for learning;]

presenting queries to non-expert netizens over a network, the netizens participating in [the] a training process of a learning system;

continually updating the learning system and refining the queries based on responses to the queries provided by the netizens.

20. (Once Amended) A system for implementing a training process comprising:

a means for presenting queries to and receiving responses from non-expert netizens over a network, the netizens participating in the training process;

a means for continually updating the system and refining the queries based on the responses to the queries provided by the netizens.